GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Library History Special Interest Group feedback

How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

Contributors

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Introduction

On July 2017, by email 5 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent who knows? years of library experience.

2 x retired academics, 2 x public librarians

There was no workshop. Responses were by email.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates by email this means that ???

E.g. Libraries are an accessible source of factual information, where people come to find the truth. Libraries are inclusive community centres where all voices are represented. To make this vision reality, librarians feel part of a global community where they exchange ideas and help each other overcome challenges.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

LIST ANSWERS Q4:

1. *preservation, openness, freedom and privacy; privacy watchdog for users;*

2. *Fair: People's love of libraries is underpinned by our contribution to a fair and just society;*

3. *Equality of opportunity - We help to overcome the gap between advantage and disadvantage ; Provide access to information and information resources for everyone, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.*

4. *Access, Information, Diversity, Inclusion.*

5. *Promote lifelong learning and education for all.*

6. *Protect intellectual freedom, democracy, history, and privacy.*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

LIST ANSWERS Q5:

1. *Organising information, knowledge management, reference services, and preservation.*

2. *facilitating and allowing access to information;*

3. *Libraries and information management - the same skills, differently interpreted.*

4. *Valuing cultural history and the protection, storage and maintenance of it;*

5. *Providing access to information and programming.*

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

LIST ANSWERS Q6:

1. *Libraries are for Everyone : providing quality services to people who are homeless*

2. *Analogue and digital - we will need to look good and work well both online and in real life;*

3. *Community created content - libraries will help connect readers with all kinds of new content from surprising creators;*

4. *Maintaining visibility in an online environment - a seamless experience for users will be balanced with the need to identify the library as the service deliverer;*

5. *Subject matter experts – so that librarians can work with their users in technical/university and subject libraries as part of the user's team and not a remote being (aka a special librarian);*

Comments: Value proposition: A powerful business case can be built from meaningful data. Centralise and embed - Bringing technical services together is offset by embedding information professionals in teams. Space - rapid access to information will be as important as the library footprint. More collaboration and partnerships with other industries. Encouraging and assisting people in search of truth. Breaking down barriers to service, increased access to information, and advocacy.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

LIST ANSWERS Q7:

1. *Being "managers" and following managerial traits at the expense of professional commitment.*

2. *Allowing politics to dictate and/or influence the services and resources they provide to the public.*

3. *Bureaucratic and commercialized modes of operation that effect services and employee management.*

4. *…*

5. *…*

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

LIST ANSWERS Q8

1. *DIY information, Instant gratification – we will compete with Google.*

2. *It's not all about the book - libraries will continue to connect people with information and ideas and much, much more.*

3. *People not being willing to put aside their differences in order to work together for the common good of all people. Not treating everyone equally.*

4. *Inequality, commercialization, political polarization, and lack of privacy.*

5.

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

LIST ANSWERS Q9:

1. *Unimaginable technologies: Technology will continue to have a massive impact on how we work and the services we deliver.*

2. *More space not less - More space for people, less space for books in our future libraries.*

3. *Big data - work with IT to source data and make it discoverable.*

4. *Ebooks will be important, and so will print – we're not writing off the physical book.*

5. *Funding and staying relevant.*

Comments:

The world is at great risk from intolerance and polarization. Libraries need to partner with other agencies to counter them, but there are no quick fixes.

The post-truth, fake news, alternative facts challenge. It is a challenge to our profession i.e. because we have this long history of neutrality.

One of the main challenges libraries face is funding, getting enough funds to provide access to information (technology, internet connectivity, digital and print resources) to everyone in the surrounding area is a constant battle. Another major challenge is that of maintaining appropriate levels of service and training for constantly evolving technologies.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

LIST ANSWERS Q10:

1. *The library experience - others provide information, but no one else provides the library experience.*

2. *A seat at the top table - leveraging the importance of knowledge.*

3. *Finding inexpensive continuing librarian education opportunities. It's becoming more and more expensive to attend conferences, webinars, and workshops. Although there are free and low-cost conference, workshops, and webinars, there needs to be more of them.*

4. *Maintaining a focus on the service orientation of librarianship while working in an increasingly commercialized and political society.*

5. *Lack of mentorship for general professional development and publishing guidance.*

Comments:

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How a united library field can make a difference

How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?

LIST ANSWERS Q11

1. *Reading – a national pastime;*

2. *IFLA's core values:*
   the endorsement of the principles of freedom of access to information. ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
   the belief that people, communities and organizations need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational, cultural, democratic and economic well-being
   the conviction that delivery of high quality library and information services helps guarantee that access
   the commitment to enable all Members of the Federation to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion.

3. *Making sure that library workers have the tools, support, and resources they need to successfully and effectively meet the needs of the people and institutions they serve.*

4. *Also, promoting and supporting continuing education and promotion opportunities of library workers. In addition, actively recruiting people who have an interest in joining the library field.*

5. *Advocate for and promote resources that address these challenges. Collaborate with other organizations to address funding issues and reach a larger audience. Continue to advocate for libraries on an international level. Continue to strive for international standards and best practices.*

Comments:

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The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

LIST ANSWERS Q12:

1. *Everyone a member - the gift of a library membership card for every child at birth.*

2. *Access for all.*

3. *unity, a commitment to providing outstanding library service, promoting and supporting the library profession, and promoting and supporting libraries, and promoting outreach efforts to the people and institutions served by libraries, and bringing library services to people and institutions not being served by libraries.*

4. *Access to information resources and technology for everyone. Service without barriers. All organizations working together to accomplish common goals.*

5.	

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

LIST ANSWERS Q13:

1.	*Promote high standards of provision and delivery of library and information services*
2.	*Encourage widespread understanding of the value of good library & information services*
3.	*Represent the interests of our members throughout the world*
4.	*Improving, expanding, and promoting outstanding library service.*
5.	*The creation of library service standards. Advocacy for access to information and technology for everyone.*

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in Perth, Western Australia in July 2017. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. At the end of 2017, the first results of all the workshops and online discussions will be turned into a *Global Vision Report*, which in turn will be adapted into concrete strategies, processes and work programmes in 2018.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit globalvision.ifla.org.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following #iflaGlobalVision and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on https://globalvision.ifla.org.